

OPEN LETTERS.

Botany at the A. A. A. S.

Every one, I think, will welcome the new movement to compress all the sessions of the American Association for the Advancement of Science into a single week, thus avoiding the Sunday hiatus; and every one should heed the GAZETTE's advice to attend the meetings, for the mutual good of American botany and of the Association. It will also be a good plan, no doubt, to publish a program of section G some time in advance. There is one feature of this program which should be carefully studied, and that is the nature of the papers which are admitted to it. I do not mean that the committee should exercise any censorship over papers, but simply that very many excellent papers are not of a nature to be read at a public gathering of botanists. Papers of mere technical interest should be published in some medium but should not be read. Surely, several of the papers which were read at Springfield were of no interest, save to the author, and yet they were valuable contributions to science and, as such, should have found their way into print without having been presented before section G. A technical article upon *Carex*, for example, would be intolerable in a general gathering of botanists, and yet it is conceivable that it might be worth putting into print for the delectation of the two or three, or fewer, persons in the country who care anything about the subject.

It should be true of every paper which comes before the section that at least half the members will be interested in the subject and be able to discuss it. Good writings upon any fundamental phenomena or structures of plants, upon philosophical questions, geographical matters, distribution, the latest advances and methods, and a score of other subjects, will always arouse interest and do good. Let the papers have breadth and life in them, and the meetings will abound in enthusiasm.—L. H. BAILEY, *Ithaca, N. Y.*

Botanical terminology.

In the October number of the *Bulletin* of the Torrey Botanical Club a new phase of its tendency to innovation appears, indicating that changes similar to those in botanical nomenclature are also to be made in botanical terminology.

Mr. Nash, in an article upon new or noteworthy American grasses, has changed the definite and well-known terms, "glume" and "palet," to the very loose and indefinite word "scale," and uses this freely in the diagnoses. Instead of the old terms, "empty glumes," "flowering glume" and "palet," Mr. Nash designates these organs as "outer or inner scales," or "scale 1, 2, 3, 4, etc."

We venture to ask whether there is really any reason for making such change, since these organs have always been known as the glumes and the palet. It seems very surprising indeed that Mr. Nash in describing grasses has not been aware of the morphological dissimilarity